

BLOUNT COUNTY-ONEONTA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

CHAMBER NEWS

DECEMBER 2009

Chamber Christmas Program



*Wednesday,
December 16, 2009*

*7:30 a.m.
Twin Oaks*

*Come here Christmas stories
and special holiday music!*

Sponsors

Hornsby Steel

Hydra Service

Jim Murphree Insurance Agency

McMillian Fabrication Works

Triangle Marketing

Update from the President



The monthly Blount County-Oneonta Chamber of Commerce breakfast will be held on Wednesday, December 16, 2009, at Twin Oaks. The traditional Christmas program will begin at 7:30 a.m. and will be sponsored by Hornsby

Steel, Hydra Service, Jim Murphree Insurance Agency, McMillian Fabrication Works and Triangle Marketing.

The spotlight during the December breakfast is not on chamber business, but instead on the meaning of Christmas — the reason for the season. Thus we will forgo the usual breakfast activities and will celebrate through message, song and scripture.

The Reverend Bert Goodwin will be the featured speaker. Scripture reading will be provided by Terri Lowry, Judge David Standridge and Marlene Stroud. Music and song will be presented by Miss Covered Bridge Stephanie Shelton; Miss Wallace State Jordan Ratliff; and Chris Green, Tom Prickett and Debra and Randy Beason.

The staff of Twin Oaks will be preparing holiday food and festive decorations. This will be a great opportunity to reflect on 2009 and to give thanks for the many blessings found in Blount County.

A special thanks to our sponsors, who are all members and important partners with the chamber. A very special thanks goes to those who will participate in the program. They are friends, neighbors and elected officials among us. Their participation gives the program great meaning.

— Charles R. Carr

Blount County Christmas Parade



Blount County kicked off the holiday season with its annual Christmas Parade Thursday, December 3. Thousands lined the streets of Oneonta to watch the floats, bands, classic cars, beauty queens and much more during the festive event.

A special thanks goes to St. Vincent's Blount for arranging to have Santa Claus here and providing his transportation for the parade. We also want to thank Charles Morton and the Crossroad Cruisers for providing the transportation for this year's grand marshal, McGruff the Crime Dog.

There were close to 20 beautifully decorated floats in this year's parade. Winners in the non-profit category were First Baptist Church Oneonta, first place; Mountin Pointe Ministries, second place; and Philadelphia Baptist Church AWANA Club, third place. Winners in the business category were Dunn Construction, first place; Neely Art Center, second place; and Golden Living Center, third place. Honorable Mention went to Blountsville Elementary School.

A special thank you goes to Blount County's bands who participated in this year's parade — Oneonta Redskin Marching Band directed by David Bearden, Susan Moore High School Marching Band directed by Celia Smith, Hayden High School Marching Band directed by Kevin Cleckler, Locust Fork High School Marching Band directed by Alvin McKinney, JB Pennington Marching Band directed by Elizabeth Smith, and Cleveland High School Marching Band directed by Jeremy McFall . These directors and students should be commended for their wonderful performances in the parade.

We also thank all of the volunteers who made the parade a success starting with Wes Hallman and employees of Hallman Pest Control who coordinate the line up and start of the parade. Mr. Hallman's hard work and dedication continually made the parade a success.

The parade would not be possible without the cooperation and help of the Oneonta Police Chief James Chapman and the Oneonta Police Department, the Blount County Sheriff's Department, and the City of Oneonta.

This year's grand stand was furnished by Ken McMillian of McMillian Fabrication Works, and the steps for the stage were provided by Oneonta Discount Building Supply. We thank both of these businesses for their dedication to this community as well.

The chamber also wants to thank Tim Chamblee for the outstanding job he does as emcee of the parade. He puts in countless hours preparing for the parade as well as setting up the sound system. We appreciate the generosity of the First Baptist Church for the use of chairs and sound equipment.

We also appreciate the support from Keith Hamby with the Blount County-Oneonta Agri-business Center. The parade would not be possible without the use of the center before and after the parade.

Special guests performing on the stage before the parade were students from the Neely Arts Center. We appreciate the teachers and students who put together an incredible program.

For those who couldn't make it to the parade, we hope you tuned into Otelco's Channel 70 to watch it live. Robbie McAlpine with Alpine Advertising Agency installed a new video server that allows the company to carry programming live on Otelco Cable's channel 70 as well as the company's website at www.alpineadvertising.com. Also, we thank WCRL for all they did in helping us promote the Christmas Parade and other chamber events.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Individual — **Bob and Jean Sharp** — 296 Torry Drive, Blountsville, AL 35031.

Industry — **MCoal Corporation** — Rowena Everett: #450-650 West Georgia Street, Vancouver, B C V 6 B 3 N 8 . P h o n e : 604-633-2776

Retail — **Blount County Electronics LLC** — Harold Gwin: 2459 2nd Avenue East, Suite C, Oneonta, AL 35121. Phone: 205-274-7425

Department of Industrial Relations releases the October Unemployment Rate

The Alabama Department of Industrial Relations released October's jobless numbers for the state and its 67 counties on November 20, 2009. Those figures showed an increase to 10.9%, up from September's rate of 10.7%. This is the highest level since 1984 and economists predict it is poised to go higher. Of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, Alabama has the eleventh highest jobless rate in the United States.

The report shows that 49 Alabama counties had unemployment rates of 10% or higher. Four counties are enduring rates of 20% or higher. October's jobless rate represents 226,790 individuals out of work, a jump of more than 100,000 from a year earlier.

Blount County's jobless rate made a positive change from thirteenth lowest in September (9.9%) to ninth in October (9.5%). During October, there were 2,405 countians out of work as compared to 2,499 in September. One year ago, there were 1,134 Blount Countians unemployed and the jobless rate stood at 4.3%.

The Alabama counties with the lowest jobless rates are as follows: 1) Shelby, 7.4%; 2) Madison, 7.5%; 3) Coffee, 8.3%; 4) Pike, 8.6%; 5) Lee and Tuscaloosa 8.8%; 6) Houston and Elmore, 8.9%; 7) Dale, 9.2%; 8)

Marshall, 9.4%; 9) Blount, 9.5%; and 10) Baldwin and Limestone, 9.6%.

The Alabama counties with the highest jobless rates include: 67) Wilcox, 25.1%; 66) Dallas, 21.9%; 65) Conecuh, 20.5%; 64) Monroe, 20.1%; 63) Chambers, 19.9%; 62) Perry, 19.1%; and 61) Winston, 18.8%.

The states with the lowest jobless numbers for October include: 1) North Dakota, 4.2%; 2) Nebraska, 4.9%; 3) South Dakota, 5%; 4) Montana, 6.4%; 5) Utah and Vermont, 6.5%.

The states (and the District of Columbia) with the highest jobless rates are as follows: 51) Michigan, 15.1%; 50) Nevada, 13%; 49) Rhode Island, 12.9%; 48) California, 12.5%; and 47) South Carolina, 12.1%.

The federal extension of the unemployment benefits bill was signed into law on November 6, 2009. The Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) has determined that approximately 12,000 Alabamians are eligible for this most recent federal extension of benefits. Beginning November 20, 2009, DIR asked claimants whose benefits exhausted on or before November 14, 2009, to begin certifying for the extended benefits. Claimants can certify online at www.dir.alabama.gov or by calling 1-800-752-7389.

Join the Chamber Today!

THE CHAMBER... *Your Bridge to a Brighter Tomorrow*

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